



**KEEP THE PROMISE COALITION**  
**Community Solutions, Not Institutions!**  
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**Testimony before the Public Health Committee**  
**March 12, 2010**  
**In Favor of SB 405**

Good afternoon/evening distinguished chairs and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Cheri Bragg, Coordinator of the Keep the Promise Coalition, a statewide Coalition dedicated to ensuring that a comprehensive, community mental health system is created and sustained in CT.

I am here today to testify in favor of SB 405, An Act Concerning the Development of Cost Effective Supportive Housing for Frequent Users of Costly State Services.

Supportive Housing is safe, affordable, permanent community housing. It is evidence-based and an excellent option for many individuals and families living with mental illness, as well as for people with other disabilities or who are low income. It has supports built in that are available either on-site, or nearby which can be a critical component of successful community living for many people living with mental illnesses.

This bill would create supportive housing for people who are low-income, homeless individuals and families who have chronic illnesses or disabilities who are dependent on costly emergency health care services and individuals who reside in institutions and are frequent users of state services. The Coalition would like to see the bill further clarified to ensure that people who are in institutions, but who do not necessarily frequently use other state services such as jails/prisons, shelters, or chronic emergency care, would also be able to utilize this particular supportive housing. There are people who do not end up in the criminal justice system, in shelters, or use costly emergency care services, but who reside in costly institutions and could benefit from Supportive Housing. In fact, Supportive Housing might be able to prevent use of these other high cost state services if available to people upon discharge from an institution. We feel this could easily be done by using the word "or" instead of "and" in the aforementioned part of SB 405.

Many Coalition members have testified this year and in past years about the benefits that having safe, affordable, stable housing has had on their recovery and on their ability to reconnect with friends, family, and their communities including re-entering the workforce.

Investment in Supportive Housing is more critical now, than ever. Investments such as these save the state money that is currently being spent on unnecessary, high cost services and emergency care. Many people have said that tough economic times are an opportunity to change the way we are doing business. Supportive Housing is an excellent opportunity to do so. Please pass SB 405.

Thank you.